



COMMUNITY  
MEDIA REVIEW

# Training

for Community Development

The Journal of the  
**Alliance for Community Media**

Volume 20, No. 2



# Get in touch with your community

with the

## Interactive Video Bulletin Board

### THE CHANNEL THAT TAKES REQUESTS:

- Lets viewers choose what they see.
- Handles up to 999 topics of any length.
- Prints reports of what viewers choose.
- Gives documented proof of viewership.
- Uses PC word processor files as input.
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### What current owner-operators say about the Interactive Video Bulletin Board:

"I can watch it taking calls from my office, and know that we're serving the community. The feedback helps us understand our viewing audience's likes and dislikes."

-David Vogel, General Manager,  
Community Television of Knoxville

"Since placing the system in service, we have seen a community response that now exceeds 18,000 inquiries per month. The Interactive Video Bulletin Board has become an integral part of our community service program"

- Ian N. Wheeler, Executive Director,  
Fairfax Cable Access Corporation

"Since installing the Interactive Video Bulletin Board, we've gotten more interest and participation from non-profits than we had in the last 10 years. It's less work, more effective, and it's fun for viewers to use!"

- Lynn Carillo-Cruz, Former Executive Director,  
Quote...Unquote, Albuquerque

"It's the lowest-cost, highest-impact service we offer to local non-profits. During September...participating organizations reported that an average of 65% of their calls resulted from viewership of the Interactive Video Bulletin Board."

- Barbara Popovic, Executive Director,  
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# CMR

Volume 20, No. 2

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*Community Media Review* [ISSN 1074-9004] is published by the Alliance for Community Media, Inc. Subscriptions \$35 a year for four to six issues. Send subscriptions, memberships, address changes, editorial and advertising inquiries to the Alliance for Community Media, 666 11th St. NW, Suite 806, Washington, DC 20001-4542. Phone 202/393-2650; Fax: 202/393-2653. E-mail ACM@AllianceCM.org or visit the Alliance web site at <http://www.alliancecm.org>

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Cover photo courtesy Roberto Arévalo



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# From the Chair Building Community Through Media

by Alan Bushong

When building our training and media literacy programs, we have the perfect opportunity to revive community building skills as our cornerstone.

The real strength of community media is people and their potential to make their communities better places to live.



Alliance photo

Alan Bushong

However, community interaction and dialogue are in jeopardy as those with jobs work and commute longer hours. Schools teaching citizenship are under grotesquely distorted attacks for "diverting" youth from basic skills.

As a society, we have no lack of technical skills, and we have committed to teaching these skills even as technology shifts rapidly. What we increasingly lack are models and training on working as a group to plan our future and to work through the

major issues of the day—even though these skills are timeless.

Community media centers can fill this void by designing our training programs with such intent. We can demonstrate that people who are active in their community make a difference.

In an environment of endless monologue media, we can teach dialogue. To be successful, we need to model and live such teaching, and provide the hands-on experiences that bring understanding and lifelong skills.

In doing so, community media will stand apart. Commercial media will continue to be dominated by images of "beautiful people" creating a consumer frenzy and a culture of passive, impatient, selfish people. Participation equals buying stuff.

We in community media are in the perfect position to chart a saner course. Our motto *Building Community Through Media* provides us the direction.

Alan Bushong is Chair of the Alliance for Community Media.

**"...we need to  
model and live  
such teaching,  
and provide the  
hands-on  
experiences that  
bring  
understanding  
and lifelong  
skills."**



# Training for Community Development

by **jesikah maria ross** and  
**Kelly L. Aiken**

In our increasingly fragmented and media-focused society, community access centers are uniquely positioned to bring people together to share arts and culture, create public dialogue, and address local issues. Improving conditions of community life is the cornerstone of the Access mission. Community development—increasing people's capacity for civic participation, public dialogue, and integration into community affairs—is the Access goal.

Training programs are often the main avenue to operationalize our community development goals. For this reason, training is one of the most important tasks of media access centers. With 25 years of experience, Access practitioners possess a solid background in successfully teaching community members how to use television equipment. But how do we create training programs that not only build technical skills but also encourage empowerment, community engagement, and critical perspective? This issue of *CMR* explores that question by looking back over our history, consulting allied fields, and gathering reports from Access centers across the country.

We created this *CMR* to serve as a resource for helping community access centers increase the effectiveness of their training programs. Our focus is not on technology or the use of equipment. Rather, we emphasize community-building techniques and developing media communication skills to enhance participation in public affairs. Many of the articles discuss methods to achieve community development outcomes. Others offer teaching and learning strategies for designing, delivering, and evaluating training programs.

Program profiles highlight the effective training techniques currently used by Access centers in the field.

To begin, we revisit our community media history by looking at Canada's **Challenge for Change (CFC)** project and

the lasting implications it has had for Access in this country. **Paula Manley** connects the past with the present by citing the importance of CFC in *The "New" Work of Access Centers: Nurturing Learning Communities*. Manley's article calls for a new direction in our work at Access centers. Her visionary thinking takes us beyond

technical training to focus on the needs and interests of trainees by consciously building learning communities.

Based on our field experience, we realized that there are many terms in the Access vocabulary that have achieved universal acceptance but lack clear definitions and realistic application in Access training programs. We asked several

media educators to define two commonly used terms: empowerment and community organizing. **John Higgins** provides a working definition of empowerment in the article *Training for Empowerment*, and **jesikah**

**maria ross**, drawing on her interview with Higgins, addresses how to incorporate "empowering moments" into Access training programs. **Todd Samusson** discusses community organizing as a central tenet of Access in *Public Access Television: Shaping Community Organizing*, offering specific ways to turn a

community-building vision into action.

Talking to trainers around the country, we discovered that many seek opportunities to develop their facilitation and communication skills. The fields of nonformal and adult education provide teaching strategies particularly relevant to their needs. In *A Trainer's Guide: Participatory Learning and Action*, **Jules N. Pretty et al.** discuss how adults learn and the essential elements of a creative learning environment. Adult educator **Laurie Lippin** contributes simple training techniques such as trust building exercises that can be incorporated into Access training programs to improve group dynamics.

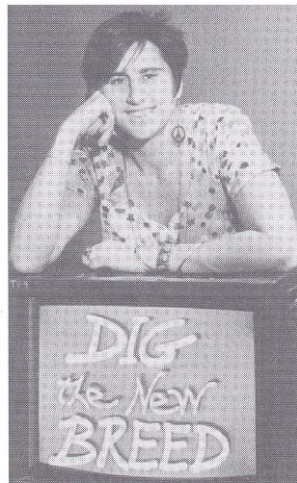
In *Evaluating Training Programs*

**Kelly Aiken** discusses evaluation as an ongoing, integrated component of program planning and implementation. She outlines three types of evaluation and provides practical ways to gather information so as to inform trainers, trainees, directors, and even policy makers about the impact of Access centers. The evaluation case

study provided by **Chuck Peterson** describes the benefits of assessing an Access training program and the results of his center's formal evaluation.

Other program case studies with different approaches to training and community development are integrated throughout the issue. **Denise Zaccardi** tells us about a youth program in Chicago designed to address community issues through the media arts. **Linda Iannacone** introduces us to an Access outreach program for community-based organizations in New York City. **Lauren-Glenn Davitian** profiles computer training for economic development in the Northeast while **Antonia Stone** and **Peter Miller** address building partnerships around the country and conducting technology training programs for democracy and

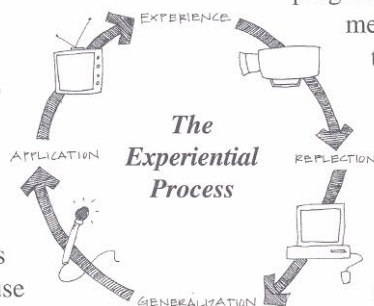
See *From the Editors*, page 19...



jesikah maria ross



Kelly L. Aiken





# The “New” Work of Access Centers

## Nurturing Learning Communities

### The 1967 Fogo Island Project

The site for **Challenge for Change**’s first major experiment with the use of film as a catalyst for social change was Fogo, a rocky island of 5,000 people off the coast of Newfoundland. With the fishing industry in decline and 60 percent of the population on welfare, the government was considering relocating all of Fogo’s residents. According to **Challenge for Change**’s **Dorothy Todd Hénaut**, “The barriers were distance, religious factionalism and hopelessness, adding up to a severe lack of communication among the islanders.”

When **Challenge for Change** producer **Colin Low** and his film crew headed for Fogo Island, their intention was to produce traditional social documentaries. Instead, they collaborated with community organizers, Newfoundland’s **Memorial University** and the residents of Fogo. Together they created a new relationship between filmmaker and subject in which the primary concern was improving communication on the island and helping people know and understand each other better.

Footage was shot only with permission of those being filmed. The filmmakers promised that no film would be shown outside the island without the islanders’ permission. Those filmed were the first to see the footage and they had authority to have anything removed they didn’t like. This greatly increased the islanders’ comfort and trust in the process.

The islanders suggested locations and subjects for filming. Using a linear approach with minimal editing, the filmmakers created portraits of life on Fogo, including *Jim Decker Builds a Longliner*, *The Songs of Chris Cobb*, *Fishermen’s Meeting*, and *The Children of Fogo Island*. The films were shown around the

island followed by discussions. A growing feeling of community emerged. People began to identify common problems and possible solutions. The films were instrumental in helping the islanders establish a cooperative fish processing plant with governmental support. Previous efforts to convince the government had failed. After the films were shared with cabinet

See *Fogo Island*, page 19...

by Paula Manley

We do important work as community media practitioners. By providing citizens with access to powerful communication tools and training in their use, we seek to encourage self-confidence, facilitate community dialogue, build shared understanding, and increase people’s capacity for participation in public life. This is

community development work; it is our reason for being.

Through community access training efforts over the past 25 years, thousands of people around the United States have learned video production skills; yet most access practitioners would agree we have not fully realized our community development potential. All too often we are more focused on making TV shows than nurturing community communication, and in our drive to “fill channels with programming” we have been known to lose sight of our fundamental purpose.

To understand the community development potential of today’s access organizations, we can look to our history—the **Challenge for Change** project of the **Canadian Film Board**—which was the inspiration for community access television in the United States. Initiated in 1966, **Challenge for Change** sought to “improve communications, create greater understanding, promote new ideas and provoke social change,” according to a 1971 newsletter article written by Regional Projects Producer **Dorothy Todd Hénaut**. In a variety of neglected and problem-ridden communities throughout Canada, **Challenge for Change** media makers acted as community facilitators—social animators—who engaged communities in dialogue and problem solving with the aid of media tools.

In an early **Challenge for Change** project on **Fogo Island** (see case study, left), extensive filming, community screenings and discussions led to tangible results, including a boat-building collective and a new fish processing plant. These developments greatly improved conditions on this isolated island community of 5,000. On Fogo Island, and in many other communities, **Challenge for Change** demonstrated that media could be used to help increase community confidence and willingness to take action.

Although more than three decades have passed since the

See *Nurturing*, page 18



Photo courtesy Tualatin Valley Community Access  
*“...we seek to encourage self-confidence, facilitate community dialogue, build shared understanding, and increase people’s capacity for participation in public life.”*



Photo courtesy National Film Board of Canada  
*The Children of Fogo Island*



# Public Access Television

## Shaping Community Organizing

by Todd Samusson

Every day all over the planet, people are engaged in community organizing. Somewhere working parents are organizing a daycare co-op. A village is struggling to build a new sewer system. People are helping each other recover from a flood. Citizens are mobilizing to stop a development from destroying a wetland. Workers are trying to get decent wages. A PTA meeting is addressing school budget cuts. Around the world, people are organizing.

My neighborhood in southeast Portland, Oregon has its own listserv and on-line discussion group. Our neighborhood association is developing a plan to maintain the area's livability as the population grows. Community-wide meetings are underway to make this town more bicycle friendly. A local college offers an adult education course called "Community Organizing 101." Last November, southeast Portland turned out the strongest support in America for consumer advocate **Ralph Nader's** bid for the U.S. presidency. In my town, people are organizing.

**What is Community Organizing?** In human systems, things don't happen by accident. They have to be organized. Musician and community organizer **Si Kahn** has the best definition I've come across. "Organizing is people working together to get things done," reads the very first line of his book, **Organizing** (1986). Simple and to the point. I read that 15 years ago and it still holds up.

Today we live in a media-driven, techno-gadget, whiz-bang culture full of more consumerist distractions than you can list during a commercial break. With its insistence on excessive consumption, competition and individualism, the media culture furthers our social isolation. A recent study of 91 countries rated the United States highest in emphasis on the individual and lowest in emphasis on collaboration. Yet for 25 years, public

access television workers in the U.S. have been using television as a tool for community organizing—a tool used by "people working together to get things done."

**Community Organizing and Public Access.** In April, at the Northwest Regional Alliance for Community Media Conference, George

Stoney shared a clip of the very first citizen-made video production, **VTR-St. Jacques**. It was made in Quebec by low-income citizens struggling with economic issues. An exchange between two people in the clip went as follows:

Young woman: "I'm learning to work with a citizen's committee."

Interviewer (a member of the community): "What's that?"

Young woman: "A group of people who have decided to take control of their lives."

There it was in a black and white, dimly lit image: Public access television as a community organizing tool being born.

**It's the Process and the Product.** I'll come right out and state my bias:

community organizing is the highest and best use of public access television. How can public access be used as a tool for organizing? To answer this question, we need to look at the processes and products associated with public access television.

The first thing that comes to most people's minds when they consider using public access television is the idea of an end product—a TV show. The most obvious benefit of using television is its capability to send a message to an audience. From an organizer's point of view, this is but one of many aspects of using video.

The process involved in working

together to make a public access videotape is ultimately more powerful and lasting than the product you produce. Let's assume you're making use of public access television to address an issue in your community. What are you likely to experience?

First of all, your group will have to clarify and define the issue among yourselves. What does this issue mean to each person involved? How do you, as a group, define the issue? Who do you want to reach with your production? How do you want to frame the issue to reach your intended audience? Which aspects of the issue are most important to raise? What sequence do you want to use to present your ideas? What images and sounds do you want to use?

Planning a video production involves countless decisions and choices. When you're working with a group, many of those choices are made collectively. That

See *Shaping*, page 17...

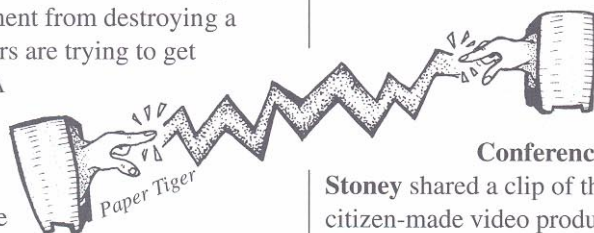
## Video Afterlife

Continue your community organizing efforts by taking your video out into the community to promote dialogue and action. A video afterlife can take on many different forms. Here are just a few suggestions:

- \* Distribute your video to targeted audiences for viewing.
- \* Place a copy of the video in your local library.
- \* Organize community screenings in homes, cafes, and schools.
- \* Organize a panel of community members to discuss the content of the video. Have the producers discuss why they made the video.

Regina Faul-Doyle

- \* Coordinate your efforts with local agencies promoting the same message. Donate a copy of the video to the organization.
- \* Send a copy to your local politician.



Good Evening. Tonight we're talking about what's happening in our neighborhood and how you can get involved in neighborhood activities and events.





# Training for Empowerment

by jesikah maria ross

This article focuses on the specifics of the vision of public access, and the point at which that vision moves into implementation: training. A few years ago, John Higgins conducted a study as part of his doctoral dissertation that investigated whether or not the vision actually does what it says: help citizens empower themselves through video training. The inquiry led him through an interesting maze of intersecting ideas that community television and media literacy proponents may find interesting.

**Empowerment: What is it?** In doing his study, Higgins sifted through 25 years of literature related to public access produced by the alternative video movement, scholars, cable companies, government agencies, and research think tanks. In two and a half decades, all of these sources had talked about something called “empowerment,” but very few had defined it. No one had really studied systematically whether such a thing as “empowerment” is a consequence of participation in the production of public access programs.

## Editor's Note

*Most of this article is adapted from **Visions of Empowerment: Media Literacy, and Demystification**, originally published in **Community Television Review**, Volume 16, No.3 (June, 1993) by John W. Higgins. We reprinted edited selections from Higgins' original article since it is one of the few pieces in public access television literature that examines the Access vision through the lens of training and also defines empowerment within a community television context. The final section, Training Methods for Empowerment, is based on an interview with Higgins. To read Higgins' body of work on community television, see his web site at [www.usfca.edu/~higginsj](http://www.usfca.edu/~higginsj). We wish to thank John Higgins for permission to repackage and reprint his work.*

Granted, there is anecdotal evidence that something is going on that “looks like” empowerment. However, if public access to video communication is to survive and flourish, it will be necessary to provide policy makers with more specific documentation of its uses and benefits.

So what is the empowerment that is proposed by public access? In most of the public access literature, you have to read between the lines. And this sort of

reading is much easier when the “vision thing” is put into a historical context.

**The Vision of Public Access.** In the late 1960s and early 70s an old idea—that some social injustices might be addressed by technology—was given a new focus: portable video. The idea went like this: With the new portable video equipment for program creation, and the emerging broadband cable television for a distribution system, the inequities of a monopoly-controlled broadcast media system would have to be addressed. Everyday people would have their voices heard through the electronic media, and others would be able to hear the rich diversity of perspectives their neighbors had to offer.

The “diversity of ideas” that was to be encouraged by public access also involved other utopian visions—in particular, that of individual and group empowerment. In this vision, empowerment meant becoming aware of one's self, others, and society, and after one had a “voice,” actively working to influence society.

This empowerment was to take place, in part, through video production training. Learning to create television would demystify the media as individuals became aware of media structure and influence. Participating in the production of television programs would lead to a “visual literacy” as individuals learned how to “read” and “write” media codes. These skills would

allow persons not only to become more discriminating viewers, but also to actively speak out in the media and shape their social world. Thus, they would discover their own “voice.”

This vision of empowerment through public access video training was shared by practitioners, academics, and others. It is a vision widely accepted today—to the point that its assumptions are often considered sacrosanct, unquestioned within the movement itself. Critics, however, point to at least three problems with the public access vision: 1) the vision is too dependent on

technology as a cure-all, 2) it does not address the necessary structural changes in society for authentic change, and 3) there is no real attention paid to the process by which the vision is to be implemented. Let's take a closer look at this third point.

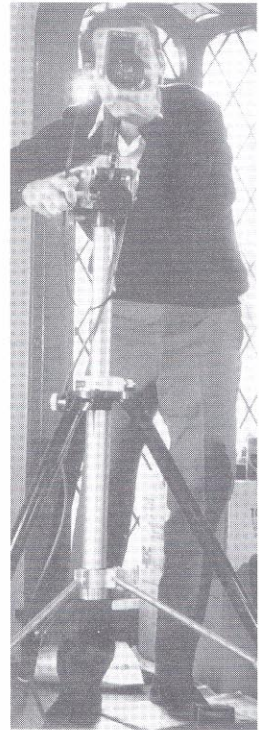
### Empowerment Defined.

The underlying concepts of the public access vision of empowerment have much in common with the areas of visual literacy, media education, and critical pedagogy (see sidebar on page 23 for resources). In particular, the media education and critical pedagogy literatures 1) more fully describe “empowerment,” 2) delineate the ingredients of empowerment within a video training context, and 3) suggest a direction for training methods which might help advance the concept of empowerment.

Based on the contributions from these sources, Higgins defined empowerment as similar to Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's “praxis”: practice and reflection.

See *Training*, page 22

“...empowerment was to take place, in part, through video production training.”





# CTCNet

## For Democracy and Empowerment

### Techniques for Effective Training

by Laurie Lippin

**P**rovide visuals, use large news print posters when possible to keep the group focused together rather than just handouts. Always have handouts for whatever you are sharing. Use the media you are teaching about as demonstration and re-enforcement.

Pause frequently to allow for the maximum in participation for those who need to talk, for those who need to ask questions, to try, to practice. Solicit feedback from your group as to what they are getting, what they need.

Use "think, pair, share" dyads or triads (two's or three's) to have participants repeat what they have learned or to engage about new questions.

Divide your group up into learning subgroups and let them practice together what has been taught. Develop a game or activity in which the skills can be practiced and then demonstrated successfully to the entire group. Allow for as much repetition as possible.

Use hands-on as much as possible. Provide instant feedback, supportive comments, always praise something.

Honor your time commitments. Always start and end on time. If you are running over, renegotiate with the group for additional time. Don't assume.

Ask for verbal evaluations at the end of every session and use that information to improve on your training. An easy and fast way to accomplish this is to ask for pluses and minuses. What were some things that were done during the session that were helpful to their learning; what were some things that hindered their learning or that need to be improved?

*Dr. Laurie Lippin is an instructor in Human and Community Development at the University of California at Davis specializing in adult education and diversity. She can be reached at (707) 792-9935 or llippin@ucdavis.edu*

by Antonia Stone and Peter Miller

**T**he Community Technology Centers' Network (CTCNet) is a network, in the old-fashioned sense, of agencies and programs that offer technology access and education to people who might otherwise not enjoy such opportunities. CTCNet recognizes that in an increasingly technology-dominated society, people who are socially and/or economically disadvantaged will become further disadvantaged if they lack access to computer and computer-related technologies. By linking network affiliates—from settlement houses to storefronts to libraries—CTCNet works to create a society in which all people are equitably empowered by technology skills and usage. To enhance each affiliated agency or program's capacity to provide technology access and education, CTCNet produces a start-up manual and semi-annual review and supports a monthly on-line newsletter. Through a variety of electronic discussion forums and national and regional in-person meetings, CTCNet provides additional resources to its members, offers the benefit of national partnerships and collaborations, and facilitates sharing of experience and expertise.

Community cable access centers are one of CTCNet's fastest growing member sectors. Public, Education, and Government (PEG) Access stations expanding into "new media" centers find useful program, technical, and human support in CTCNet and provide some of its most important leadership. As technologies and public policy guiding their growth and use converge, CTCNet and Alliance have

*See Using Democracy, page 20...*

### CTCNet Credo

#### Purpose is:

- universal technological enfranchisement,
- to broaden the scope of personal capability and interest, and
- to enable learning and functioning through technology.

#### Technology is:

- tool,
- information resource, and
- vehicle for communication.

#### Students can:

- learn to operate machines and programs,
- learn how to create programs,
- learn how to use programs as tools,
- learn from programs, and
- learn with programs.

#### Students are:

- participants in learning process,
- working collaboratively,
- in control,
- tinkerers,
- actively engaged, and
- playing to win.

#### Results are:

- empowerment,
- skill in tool use,
- success in learning,
- increased self-esteem,
- ability to use resources,
- ability to articulate process and need,
- recognition of personal contribution,
- respect for contributions of others, and
- habits of self-assessment.

#### Teachers are:

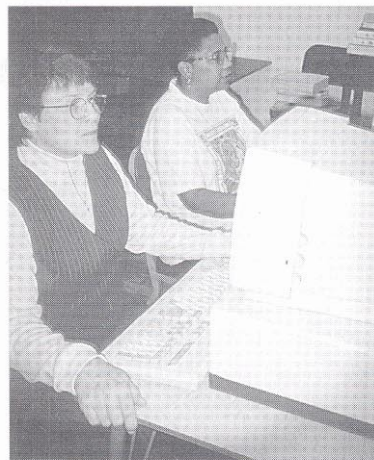
- facilitators, guides, coaches, gardeners,
- resources,
- participants in the learning process, and
- role models.

#### Activities are:

- project based,
- reference real-world activity,
- respect and use background, culture, skills of participants, and
- provide for team work.

#### Assessment is:

- the joint task of participant and teacher,
- based on personal accomplishment, and
- substantiated by personal portfolio.



*Photo courtesy CTCNet*

*"CTCNet works to create a society in which all people are equitably empowered by technology skills and usage."*



# Participatory Learning and Action

Adapted from *Participatory Learning & Action: A Trainer's Handbook*, International Institute for Environment and Development, 1995, by Jules N. Pretty, Irene Gujit, Ian Scoones, and John Thompson.

**T**eaching and Learning. Although the basic objective of training should be to create a learning environment, it is regrettably often about teaching. Teaching is what we are all used to. Most of our time in school or college is characterized by teaching. One person, the teacher, stands at the front of rows of students or children. This one person knows something, and is trying to encourage the others to know it, too. It is formal, and often has little to do with learning.

Learning is not usually an outcome of formal teaching. Instead, it comes from a process of self-development through experience. So trainers who aim to encourage learning have a particular challenge. They have to do something quite different if they are to be agents of change. This article deals with how

trainers can impart skills and enhance the knowledge of trainees, participants, adult learners, and students. These people can then apply what they learn to change their behavior and attitudes about themselves and others, to get involved in local issues of importance to them, and to participate in community affairs.

It is important to reflect on terminology. You, the trainer, are also a facilitator, tutor, and teacher. The people you are working with are trainees, but also participants, students and learners. None of these terms is entirely satisfactory. In this article, we use both 'trainer' and 'facilitator' to describe the same role and 'participant' and 'trainee' when referring to the people attending your sessions or workshops.

The actions you initiate should always lead to growth for the trainees. This is the basic building block of all training. Learning is about developing yourself. To achieve success, trainees have to be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning experience so that it continues long after the training workshop has ended.

In almost every training situation, you will encounter a diverse group of people with different training needs and learning preferences. The learning approaches you use should cater to these different needs. They should be chosen keeping in mind some basic facts about adult learning processes (see *How Adults Learn*, this page). In particular, it is important to note that people learn best when they feel they are in control of the learning process, rather than receiving a lesson. Participants learn best when they are actively involved and motivated.

**On Being A Learner.** Most trainers do not pay sufficient attention to individual learning capacity. The ability to learn is widely regarded as something

people do well or poorly and are unable to change. Yet all adults have the continuing ability to learn. As trainers you can encourage learning by incorporating the different learning styles adults develop to accommodate their learning preferences. In his book, *Experiential Learning:*

*Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (1984), David Kolb suggests the learning (or

training) process should incorporate four learning modes to accommodate most learning styles. When

integrated, these learning modes build the kinds of abilities that learners need if they are to be effective. The four learning modes are

1. Concrete experience: participating fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences,
2. Reflective observation: reflecting on and observing experiences from many perspectives,
3. Abstract conceptualization: creating concepts that integrate observations into logically sound ideas or theories, and
4. Active experimentation: using ideas and theories to make decisions and solve problems.

Most people develop learning styles that emphasize some learning abilities over others. Busy managers, for example, are usually strong on active experimentation but weak on reflective observation skills; an academic may have the opposite skills; a community organizer may be strong on concrete experience but weak on abstract conceptualization. Such differences in learning styles can create problems for trainers, particularly if they do not pay attention to the mix of skills, attitudes and experience present in participants.

What is clear, though, is that all  
**See A Trainer's Guide, page 24...**



## *How Adults Learn*

**A**dults are voluntary learners. They perform best when they have decided to attend the training for a particular reason. They have the right to know why a topic or session is important to them.

Adults have usually come with an intention to learn. If this motivation is not supported, they will switch off or stop coming.

Adults have experience and can help each other to learn. Encourage the sharing of that experience and your session will become more effective.

Adults learn best in an atmosphere of active involvement and participation.

Adults learn best when it is clear that the context of the training is close to their own tasks or jobs. Adults are best taught with a real-world approach.

Source: Robert Smith, Alan Rogers, Jenny Rogers, in *Participatory Learning & Action: A Trainer's Guide*.



# *A Natural Process*

## Evaluating Training Programs

by Kelly L. Aiken

Evaluation is a natural process. We all assess our work by reviewing facts and impressions, considering them in light of our original intention, and drawing some conclusions. The purpose of any evaluation is to learn from our actions in order to make improvements.

We all reach conclusions about the relative success or failure of our training programs and activities. Formal evaluation helps

assure that those conclusions are based on systematically collected information. Analyzing the information and reaching conclusions will inform program planners, trainers and trainees.

Generally speaking, evaluation serves three purposes: 1) to improve current and future efforts, 2) to identify programs, or elements of programs, that are not working, and 3) to measure the degree of change that has occurred.

It is important to recognize that evaluation is not a task left to the last 15 minutes of the final training session. As stated in **Making Health Communication Programs Work: A Planners Guide** (1992), "assessment and careful planning are interdependent, integral functions of program development and implementation."

There are many forms and types of evaluation, from the very informal and simple to the very formal and complex. Evaluation can be done by an internal evaluator—someone on your staff—or an external evaluator brought to your center from outside (see *An Evaluation Case Study*, page 13). Three types of evaluation relevant to assessing community media training are *formative*, *process* and *outcome*. The type of evaluation you choose will depend on the general focus of your efforts and the questions you want to answer.

**Formative Evaluation.** A formative evaluation provides information for program improvement, modification, and management. Formative evaluation often

takes place during program design and planning, but is frequently integrated into already existing programs. The overall goal of a formative evaluation is to increase the success of a program by providing insight into training problems and ways to overcome them. To do this a formative evaluation examines the

strengths and weaknesses of specific training activities, techniques, and materials to assess the effectiveness of the training methodology.

Trainers can also be evaluated to improve their communication skills and teaching strategies.

For example, if you are thinking about implementing a new type of training program, a formative evaluation can take the form of a "dry run" to assess the effectiveness of the new training activities and whether the program meets community members' needs. This information allows you to integrate participant needs and make changes to the training methodology early in the program planning stages. For a current program, formative evaluation looks a lot like the GRTV case study, which involved assessing teaching techniques, materials, and the learning environment.

**Process Evaluation.** A process evaluation examines the procedures and tasks of implementing an entire program. Within the context of community media, training is considered one element of the whole outreach program. The primary goal of a process evaluation is to gather information that will tell you how the program is operating. The evaluation is designed to monitor a program in progress by systematically observing what actually occurs on a day-to-day basis. This might involve tracking requests for training and general information, numbers of trainees who go on to produce shows, program costs, demographic information about participants, and outreach strategies.

**Outcome Evaluation.** An outcome evaluation examines the impact of a community media training program from

the participant and organizational perspective. This type of evaluation is often guided by programmatic goals in order to determine the results and effects of a training program. A more participatory approach will also assess whether individual participant goals have been met. Overall, an outcome evaluation should provide you with information about the qualitative value of the training program.

To do this type of evaluation it is important that your programmatic goals are translated into measurable outcomes. It helps to determine specific participant skills, behavior, or knowledge that indicate they have achieved one or more of the intended training outcomes. This will require collecting information before, during, and after training implementation. Measures of success may be self-reported during interviews or in questionnaires, and observed during a training. Pre- and post-training tests are also used to measure changes in skill and knowledge attainment.

These three types of evaluation are not mutually exclusive. Each one focuses on unique aspects of community media training programs, answering different types of questions. They can occur simultaneously if you seek a comprehensive evaluation. The important thing is to design your evaluation to meet your needs and in accordance with how much time, money, and person power can be devoted to the effort.

**Designing an Evaluation.** An evaluation is comprised of five primary elements: objectives, questions, information collection, analysis and reporting. After you determine the general focus on your evaluation there are important decisions to make concerning the evaluation plan. In their book **Program Evaluation: A Design Manual** (1983), Brinkerhoff et al suggest asking yourself a series of questions to identify the specific elements of your evaluation design.

Your evaluation design should be simple. Make sure your objectives and evaluation questions are clear. Gather enough data to meet your objectives, but not so much that you will not know where

*See Evaluating, page 21...*

**"It is important to recognize that evaluation is not a task left to the last 15 minutes of the final training session."**



# Evaluating Your Programs

## Information Collection Methods

by Kelly L. Aiken

Many information gathering methods are available to the internal and external evaluator. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses depending on the type of information you want to collect. Clear evaluation objectives will help you determine the best information gathering method for your evaluation. Below we discuss three familiar techniques—interviews, questionnaires, and participant observation—and cite situations when they work best.

**Interviews.** Interviews are used frequently to understand how programs impact and affect individuals. Interviews are best for answering such open-ended questions as “what did you learn from this process?” or “how do you view the media after participating in this training?” As described by **Colin Robson** in his book **Real World Research** (1993), “the interview is a flexible and adaptable way of finding things out. Face-to-face interviews offer the possibility of modifying one’s line of inquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that self-

administered questionnaires cannot.”

Interviews, however, have some drawbacks. They are very time consuming to administer and document. Remaining objective, being consistent and refraining from asking leading questions that might get someone to say what you want to hear is difficult. If you incorporate interviews into your evaluation design try to follow these tips:

- 1) Create a time schedule (e.g., 30-minute interviews) and stick to it;
- 2) Have specific interview questions to ask all interviewees;
- 3) Ask questions in a simple, straightforward manner;
- 4) Listen to the interviewee; and
- 5) Record information in an unobtrusive manner.

**Questionnaires.** The self-administered questionnaire is usually a set of printed questions organized in a systematic way and easy to distribute to large numbers of people. It is by far the most common evaluation technique used to gather information about training programs. Unfortunately, questionnaires are overused, resulting in low response rates

and often inaccurate answers. Keep in mind too, that they’re not very effective if you work within a community with a low literacy rate. However, if designed correctly, questionnaires are cost-effective, allow for privacy and are easy to tabulate.

So how do you design a good questionnaire that provides you with relevant information? **The Evaluation Sourcebook** (1984) provides a few suggestions:

- 1) Make sure you know what type of information you want to gather

(demographic, likes/dislikes, lessons learned, etc.).

- 2) Arrange the questions in a logical sequence beginning with the easiest and the least threatening.
- 3) Closed-ended or fixed-choice questions (i.e., people select a response from several alternatives) are usually preferable to open-ended questions (i.e., people provide their own responses) because they are easier to analyze and elicit more standardized responses.
- 4) When using rating scales, such as poor to excellent, our tendency is to choose the middle category, so only provide four categories.
- 5) Pretest your questionnaire to determine whether you’re getting the type of information you want. You may have to rewrite or reorder the questions several times to get it right.

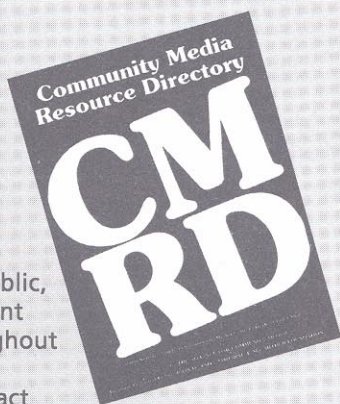
**Participant Observation.** As an information-gathering technique, participant observation involves watching and writing. It is a useful technique when you want to know how a trainer interacts with participants and the effectiveness of training activities. The observer is there to capture information about what is going on during the training and take detailed notes to document the process. This involves descriptive observations of the learning environment, trainer, trainees and activities, personal impressions, feelings and an analysis of the training. You can use formal techniques such as rating scales and trainer evaluator forms, or simply capture the information that best satisfies your evaluation objectives.

A participant observer can play numerous roles when evaluating a training program. They can choose to participate in training activities or just watch; they can identify themselves as a evaluator or not; they can use obvious recording techniques such as a computer or tape recorder, or wait to record information until after the session is finished. Participant observation is especially useful when situations are repeated frequently throughout the process and when the activities are accessible to observers.

*Kelly L. Aiken is co-editor of this issue of CMR.*

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# *GRTV* An Evaluation Case Study

by **Chuck Peterson**

**A**s trainers, we work to activate our media center's mission by designing and implementing community television training programs. We develop a curriculum, teach classes, and oversee many other elements related to community media training. But how do we know if we are reaching our training program goals? An external evaluation is an excellent way to discover weaknesses and affirm strengths in our training programs.

Grand Rapids Cable Access Center's (GRTV) training program was evaluated by **Ginger Sisson**, a graduate student from **Michigan State University (MSU)**. Ginger is an experienced high school teacher with a background in teacher evaluation and school media center operations. She came to GRTV to fulfill a community internship requirement that is part of her master's degree program in Educational Leadership at MSU.

Ginger and I discussed at length how GRTV's trainers desire to improve their classes but since most come from a technical background, as opposed to an education background, they often don't know where to begin. As a result, Ginger's program evaluation focused on our training methods and strategies, enrollment procedure, publicity for the training program, course descriptions, functionality of our facilities, and participant's class assessments. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide all those involved in training with some feedback and tools to strengthen our program.

To gather the information, Ginger attended each of our core classes: Orientation, Media Methods, Portable Production, Editing, and Studio Certification. In each

class, she used a standard high school teacher evaluation form and took participant observation notes to assess the specific strengths and weaknesses of each trainer's curriculum design, teaching methods, and training strategies. Ginger also administered our in-house class evaluation questionnaire to the students.

**"At the end of her 80-hour internship, Ginger presented us with the evaluation results..."**

At the end of her 80-hour internship, Ginger presented us with the evaluation results in a report comprised of the following sections: Project Overview, Publicity, Philosophy and Goals, Miscellany, and General Recommendations. This report also included sections devoted to each class she attended; each of these sections consisted of a class assessment, copies of the class handouts she received, an

evaluation of the trainer for that class, and a summary of student comments gleaned from our class evaluation questionnaire.

The most valuable information for me was in the "General Recommendations" section. Here, Ginger listed 10 suggestions for improving our training structure. They ranged from simple (have people wear

name tags) to major (throw out a required, but redundant, class); to obvious (use more video in training) to more subtle ("you are not called to be a sage on the stage, but a guide at the side"). We have implemented many of Ginger's recommendations. Others we are still working on, like trying to use

the medium of video more effectively as a teaching tool.

The whole experience was great for both sides. Ginger went away with an appreciation for access (and a membership) as well as some experience in evaluating a community-based organization that is much different from a school. GRTV gained a great tool for refining our training program, as well as affirmation for the things we do well.

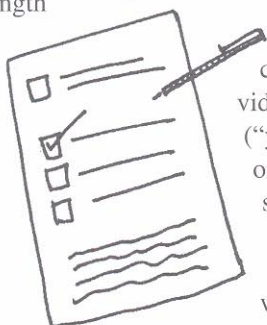
After this experience, I highly

recommend that other centers explore the possibility of having an evaluator assess their training program. The insight of a professionally trained educator can be an especially eye-opening experience. Evaluations are a great way to help trainers successfully reach their access center's mission.

*Chuck Peterson is the Station Manager at GRTV, an affiliate of the Community Media Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He can be reached at (616) 459-4788 or [chuck@grcmc.org](mailto:chuck@grcmc.org)*

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# Chicago's Community TV Network

## The Voices and Visions of Youth

by Denise Zaccardi

**C**ommunity TV Network (CTVN) is a Chicago-based non-profit agency which provides a variety of video production classes to children, teenagers, and teachers. Our program services include in-school and after school video classes, a summer youth employment program, and **Hard Cover**—CTVN's award-winning, youth-produced, cable TV show. This article focuses on the media training components of **Hard Cover**, now in its 11th season.

**Hard Cover** gives disadvantaged urban youth the opportunity to be creators in a medium in which they are accustomed to being observers. The mission of the show is to provide low-income, inner-city youth with an opportunity to learn technical skills in a cooperative environment where they can critically examine their lives and neighborhoods. Creating videos concerning topics and issues closest to the student's real life helps participants develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In this way, CTVN helps youth build self-esteem while motivating them to become active participants in their communities.

Airing on Chicago Public Access Channel 19, **Hard Cover** gives participants video production experience while exploring community related topics ranging from school reform to racism. Most of the segments shown on **Hard Cover** are created through CTVN's in-school and after school video classes, many of which are held at alternative high schools. These classes are designed to serve low-income dropout youth, prima-

rily from African-American and Puerto Rican communities. Each class votes on the topic for the TV show they will produce. CTVN's only stipulation is that if the tape presents a problem like gangs or teen pregnancy, it must also present a solution. If there is no apparent solution, students are asked to imagine one. This provides an alternative to local news shows that present traumatic stories that leave viewers depressed and without ideas for how to resolve local issues.

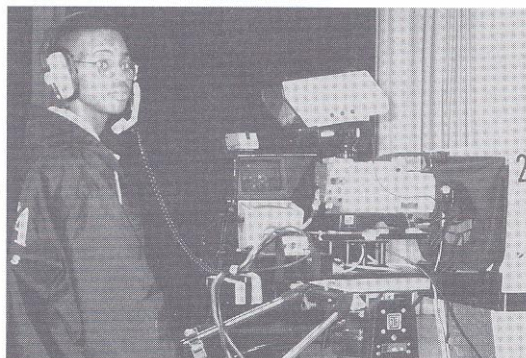


Photo courtesy CT/NET  
**Terrence Willis from CCA Academy is the cameraman for an episode of Hard Cover.**

The key training elements of **Hard Cover** include 1) allowing young people to choose their own video topics that focus on their lives and neighborhoods, 2) critically viewing and discussing a variety of youth-produced media by both CTVN and other youth videomakers, and 3) beginning the hands-on use of equipment immediately, first as practice but very quickly in the production of their own video. A class size of approximately 10 participants is ideal.

The young people involved with **Hard Cover** are responsible for all aspects of the show, including pre-production planning, interviewing, script writing, camera work, sound mixing, and editing. The young producers work on the program from September through May and produce more than 20 shows each year that air through the summer. Cablecasting the show over the public access channel validates the work of the students, reaches an audience, and makes television production real for participants.

CTVN video instructors must become familiar with issues facing the specific community in which they work and are required to be knowledgeable about issues related to low-income

minority youth. To do this, instructors take time to talk with neighborhood leaders and residents about local issues, read the community and city newspapers, research specific topics, and spend time with CTVN students and their family members. All CTVN instructors meet regularly to analyze and discuss youth, education, and community issues. For example, recently staff read an article on low literacy rates among poor youth and discussed how this has an impact on our work. We strive to think and talk about what we are doing in an ongoing way as a means to improve our classes, our videos, and our world.

The video training is evaluated by both the teacher and the students. The teacher evaluates the student's progress using a checklist of skills and gives feedback to participants, both on paper and in one-on-one meetings. Student evaluations of the program are done through questionnaires. Students are asked to evaluate the quality of instruction, the content of the classes and their own

See *Voices*, page 23...

## Hard Cover Quotes

**"V**ideo is fun and challenging because it's about putting things together into one big piece. It's helped me to feel better about myself and taught me how to talk to people about different things." **Ishalnicka Sloan**, 14.

"Learning video has given me a chance to exchange and express ideas with my peers." **Kleon Davis**, 16.

"Since I started video I've learned how to understand the media and its power. Many people use it to exploit and discriminate. I can see that now and I find myself actually criticizing TV." **Eliseo Alicea**, 17.

"In video I get to express myself. I don't get to do that in my other classes. I create new things, sometimes we go places and the best thing for me is that I get recognition and credit for it."

**Trinetta Wilson**, 17.





# Community-Based Organizations

## Mission Meets Method in NYC

by Linda Iannacone

**E**stablishing a Community Fund. In 1990, **Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN)** established a unique funding mechanism to help local non-profit organizations develop and implement video production training as part of their services: the **Revolving Grant Fund**.

This fund provides \$250,000 in grants each year to a diverse range of New York City community-based organizations (CBOs).

Grants cover the costs of purchasing equipment for the CBO, curriculum development, video instruction, and production expenses. This year's revolving grant funded 18 well-established CBOs, including the **Chinese Staff and Workers Association**, **Harlem School of the Arts**, **Dominican Women's Development Center**, **Union Settlement House** (a 100-year-old cultural community center), and the **Hetrick Martin Institute**, an alternative high school for gay, lesbian, and transgender youth.

MNN created this innovative program after twenty years of public access in NYC because we felt the need to have television programming originate from a wider variety of neighborhoods and viewpoints. While MNN serves the general public through "first come, first serve" training and equipment access, we believed that reaching out to specific communities through CBOs would be an effective way to build a community television network that would reflect the incredible diversity of voices and interests that make up the city.

Like most public access centers, MNN offers two- and four-week basic video training to MNN producers. In contrast, the revolving fund training workshops run from ten to thirty weeks,

teaching and supporting the participants through the entire process of producing a show. MNN feels that this dedication of time and support is necessary in order to engage communities that may feel disenfranchised in the arena of television production and may need to traverse technical, social, psychological, and other

real or perceived barriers.

**Designing The Programs.** Each Revolving Fund recipient organization hires a video instructor from their community who works with an MNN liaison to design a training curriculum that suits the needs, resources,

and constituency of the CBO. To do this, the instructor and MNN liaison—along with other staff or community members of the organization—discuss organizational goals, community demographics, different learning styles, and people's time availability to determine what kind of video equipment, training, and TV production would best serve the group's objectives and membership. For example, if the group wanted to answer questions directly from their constituents or other NYC viewers, we would develop a live studio call-in training show. If the group wanted to document local stories and community events, we would design a camcorder training program.

Each CBO develops its own unique approach to training. Some workshops are designed to train people as individual producers or artists, while most of the programs focus on developing collaborative group projects.

**Training the Community.** Training is generally conducted at the CBO's site, allowing the participants to learn about

video in a space which is familiar to them. Familiar places make people more comfortable, which enables them to learn better, be more motivated to attend workshops, and freely share their ideas with instructors and fellow participants. Perhaps most importantly, receiving training at the CBO site encourages participants to connect to the idea of using media within their community, emphasizing the possibility and validity of creating television out of their own community experiences.

The main component of the training is hands-on video production in combination with team-building exercises focused on building communication skills. We have found that enhancing people's ability to communicate with each other and to articulate their ideas is crucial both to the strength of the project and to the empowerment and confidence of each individual participant. That's why we often spend time in our workshops discussing the collaborative nature of video and learning how to give and take orders while maintaining respect for each other's ideas, cultural biases, and personal feelings. In one exercise, each participant receives a picture cut out of a newspaper or magazine. They collaborate to create a story out of the pictures, with the resulting story being told by the group, each person articulating their picture's part of the story. This exercise teaches about collaboration and communication while helping the participants understand basic ideas of editing.

**Evaluating Our Work.** MNN uses a variety of methods to assess the outcome of the Revolving Grant Fund video trainings,

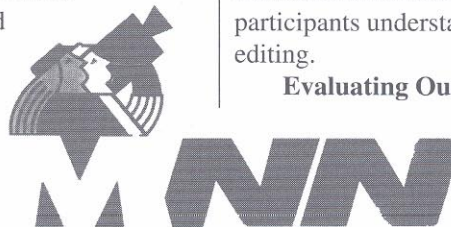
ranging from collecting organizational reports to conducting participant interviews. All grant recipient organizations are required to turn in year-end reports that document their video program. These reports provide a narrative summary of the workshop experience and give quantitative results, such as how many people were trained and how many programs were

*See Mission, page 25...*



*Photo courtesy MNN*

**Young people at Harlem's Action for Community Empowerment learn camera and interviewing techniques.**





# A Model for Community Regeneration

## CyberSkills & One C/TC

by Lauren-Glenn Davitian

**O**verview. While the community television world has focused on free expression and democracy for 25 years, we also have been involved—often unconsciously—in job training and community development. With the convergence of voice, data, and video into the digital bitstream, our movement has turned to new models of access, training, partnerships and sustainability. One new model for community development is CyberSkills, a program that builds awareness and skills so that individuals can compete in the global digital economy.

The Old North End Community/Technology Center (ONE C/TC) is one of 20 CyberSkills Development Agencies (CSDAs) that provide a viable international model for encouraging community-driven development of the information society. Based in Burlington, Vermont, ONE C/TC is a project of Chittenden Community Television (CCTV), the state's premier public access advocate and channel manager. Working with the International CyberSkills Agency, ONE C/TC is helping to create sustainable communities with a program of access, awareness raising, training, content production, research, partnership, and planning. The mission of CyberSkills is to ensure that every citizen is equipped with the essential values, skills, and opportunities to fully participate in creating the information society.

**Strategic Thinking.** In the early part of this decade, CCTV was alerted to "video dial tone" and the convergence of the cable and telephone industries. As long-time advocate for Vermont access channels and funding, manager of two community channels (Channel 17/Town Meeting TV and Channel 2/Lake Champlain Access TV), and prolific video producers, CCTV had a vested

interest in expanding the definition of "access" and promoting the development of "public telecommunications facilities" funded by all telecommunications providers (a plan known as a *Universal Service Fund*). In order to make a case to state regulators, CCTV developed a model of access, training, and development that

aimed to preserve the first amendment while building the awareness and skills necessary for our community to participate successfully in the global digital economy.

In 1994, we launched ONE C/TC. As a major strategy of the City of Burlington's Enterprise Community, HUD provided pump-priming funds for two years of operation and capital investments. Over the past two years we have trained more than 1600 job seekers, non-profits, and small enterprises and have provided CyberSkills Awareness Raising, Basic and Professional Computer Skills,

Custom Training, Web Page Development and Technical Services workshops. We have cultivated a base of 30-100 volunteer trainers who, with the each-one-teach-one model, work in core teams and apprentice their way to become paid trainers.

Our local partners range from Burlington City Government, dozens of community-based non-profits, small/micro business development centers, the regional Chamber of Commerce, our municipal electric company, school district, and NYNEX, to the Vermont Department of Employment and Training who have donated their facilities and dedicated job training funds to assist low-income job seekers. Our international partners include the South Bristol Learning Network, ICL, Ltd., a division of Fujitsu, International CyberSkills Association, Community Technology Center's Network, Apple Computer, IBM, and the Kellogg Foundation.

**Community Development and Training.** Effective community development draws on grassroots strategies and

program planning steps. When it comes to community media training, that means conducting a community audit or needs assessment, educating the community about information technology, designing and delivering appropriate curriculum, and working with participants to utilize technology for economic gain.

### 1. Conduct a Community-Wide Audit.

Without a map of the community, it is impossible to determine existing levels of awareness and skills, where to spend scarce resources, and the best ways to recruit trainees, trainers, funders, and local champions. For example, our community audit indicated that we should go to the places that low-income job seekers frequent—the Department of Employment and Training, Department of Social Welfare, and neighborhood organizations. We also identified that skilled job seekers were willing to contribute their knowledge to train others. Now we have a cadre of 40-100 volunteer trainers who work their way from volunteer to paid training positions.

The community audit also pointed out that our neighbors were more likely to frequent the centers that were familiar to them. Rather than use our resources to build a shiny new access center during the first year, we distributed computer technology to neighborhood locations. We were, during the first year, able to confirm strong community interest in a dedicated, lifelong learning facility. After extensive research, we purchased a 2000-square-foot building in the heart of the Old North End to use for delivery of our CyberSkills Workshops and supervised computer Internet access. With more Internet capacity than any other community institution (except for the University of Vermont), we are designing a public telecommunications facility that serves as a library branch/school/community and local business center.

### 2. Raise Awareness of Information Society and Impact of Technology.

Awareness raising is the first step, before training, that helps people build confidence and, with hands-on experience, map an action plan for training and content production. Much like any public access

See *CyberSkills*, page 26...

**"Rather than use our resources to build a shiny new access center during the first year, we distributed computer technology to neighborhood locations."**



# Shaping Community Organizing

Continued from page 7

means your group will need to create a decision-making process. You'll need to engage in dialogue, listen to each other and make compromises. You'll need to learn to articulate your ideas within the group. Then, as a group, you'll need to articulate your ideas to your intended audience. Even before you run the videotape on the cable system, the process will have been a powerful learning

experience.

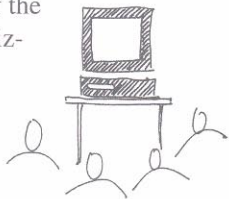
**"...the real 'products' of public access television are the experiences of people coming together to engage in dialogue and improve our communities."**

The video production process provides a vehicle for looking at issues that matter to you, creating a shared vision, and communicating it to others. This means finding your own voice to tell your own story. Religious leaders know the power of voice and story telling; that's why they use it. Community organizers use the same process. In the context of people organizing to correct an injustice or confront a powerful opponent, it's called "speaking truth to power." It's a transformative act to gather in support of community issues, find common values and concerns, and then speak up—whether it's on the street, at a public hearing, or in front of a video camera.

Cablecasting your public access video should be considered one, but not the only, use of your tape. Consider the "afterlife" of your tape. How else can your group use the video to further your organizing effort? Distribution to targeted audiences through schools or service clubs may be appropriate. How about making copies available for library check-out? Community and home screenings followed by discussion are one of the most effective vehicles for supporting organizing efforts. Such screenings create a forum for people to ask questions, share experiences and go deeper into the issue. Ultimately, these community conversations can help bring people together for collective action.

Public access television does involve making TV shows, but the real "products" of public access television are the experiences of people coming together to engage in dialogue and improve our communities. If we keep in mind that the tools of production and the means of delivery are but one piece of a larger, richer matrix of human involvement, we'll find a wealth of rewarding experiences linking public access television with community organizing.

Todd Samusson is a board member of Portland Cable Access, a member of the CMR editorial board, and an organizational learning and development consultant in Portland, Oregon. He's been involved in a variety of community organizing efforts for 27 years. He can be reached at (503) 233-4042 or [toddsamu@teleport.com](mailto:toddsamu@teleport.com)



## Organizing Principles

by Todd Samusson

If you work in the community media field, you are a community organizer. Here are some principles to keep in mind.

### Good organizing...

**...grows out of a shared vision.** People support what they help create. Building broad support requires involving people up front in defining shared vision, goals and strategies.

**...speaks to the head and the heart.** It's not enough to appeal to reason. Organizing needs to engage people on an emotional level.

**...is built on individual human relationships.** Organizers don't really spend all their time on soapboxes shouting to the masses. Organizing involves getting to know people individually and nurturing those relationships.

**...meets people where they are.** People have different life experiences and skills. Organizers need to make an effort to meet people on their own turf—physically, intellectually, and culturally.

**...is empowering.** Organizing empowers by helping people learn to build skills, work together, share struggles and celebrate accomplishments.

**...is strategic.** Organizing involves setting a clear strategic direction and accomplishing short-term objectives in the context of longer-term goals.

**...includes short-term, attainable results.** People need to know they can succeed and see that their work makes a difference. Every long journey is made up of many small steps.

**...builds community.** Good organizing creates enduring friendships. It helps people develop a sense of connection and compassion for each other and their community.

**...considers the interrelatedness of issues.** There's no such thing as single-issue organizing. The interconnection of issues provides avenues and opportunities for involving different constituencies. Different people respond to different "hooks."

**...includes the arts.** The arts have the power to reach people on a heart and soul level. Ask any veteran of the civil rights movement what moved them the most. Chances are they'll mention the songs.

**...includes food.** Food sustains life. Breaking bread together sustains community. Let's eat!

**...intentionally builds leadership.** Organizing is sustained by shared leadership. Good organizers take time to nurture the growth and development of others.

**...means everyone takes a turn washing the dishes.** Organizers are not "above" helping out with mundane tasks. Those who won't pitch in may talk about grassroots participation but they are modeling elitism.

**...is fun!** Good organizing involves learning new skills, meeting new people, sharing food, and working for a better world. Add a little music and how can this be anything but fun?



# Nurturing Learning Communities

## 3 Valleys Project

Communities throughout Oregon are experiencing growth, demographic changes and increased tensions between people of different cultures. Even when people live in the same town, they often lack opportunities to interact. In response to this pattern, Portland-based visionary **Sharif Abdullah** conceptualized the **3 Valleys Project** to assist local communities in generating cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

With funding from the **Rockefeller Foundation**, the 3 Valleys Project was already up and running in Oregon's Hood River and Mid-Willamette Valleys when Abdullah approached **Tualatin Valley Community Access (TVCA)** about managing the project in the third valley, the Tualatin Valley. TVCA jumped at the chance: as the area's community media center, the organization was already aware of the need to improve communication and understanding, particularly among Latino and Anglo residents.

The project's focus was narrowed to the towns of Cornelius and Forest Grove (populations 7,000 and 15,000, respectively) in the western part of the valley. The area was suffering growing pains in its transition from an agriculturally-based community to one with an increasing number of commuters and high-tech workers. A sense of fragmentation was escalating with the growing population.

TVCA staff member **Nicole Bush** immersed herself in the lives of the two towns, meeting with countless individuals to explain the project and ask for their suggestions and support. A steering committee formed to generate additional community contacts and guide the project as it picked up steam.

Bush then met with approximately 40 groups, including growers, farmworkers, student groups, ministers, social service workers, at-risk youth, low-income tenants, public officials, seniors, civic groups and high-tech workers, among others. The format of each meeting was simple: people were

See TVCA, page 27...

Continued from page 6

inception of Challenge for Change, a recurring theme from those early days is worth remembering in our community access work today: media tools can help us learn together, as a community. I believe the key to re-kindling our community development aspirations lies in developing community access practices that are more intentional about facilitating learning. Learning, about ourselves and each other, is at the heart of community building. In today's fragmented and fragile world, nurturing our ability to learn together is worthy of our attention.

What outcomes might community access practitioners seek as we promote learning within our access centers and our communities? I suggest we start with the following:

### *An Increased Connection to Place.*

Being connected to a place is essential to our sense of self and community. Our access centers are uniquely positioned to facilitate the telling of stories that connect us as a community, to bring together seniors and young people, watershed activists and neighborhood associations, native people and immigrants, or any number of other groups within a community who have pieces of history to share (see *3 Valleys Project*, this page). By facilitating the stories of a place—its land, its

water, its people—our community access centers can create valuable public knowledge to share with the next generation and help us better understand present circumstances. Learners are rooted in a sense of

place.

*The Ability to Test Assumptions.* We all carry our own versions of "reality"

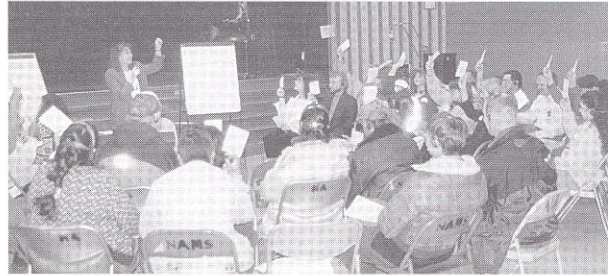


Photo courtesy Tualatin Valley Community Access

**"...our community access centers can create valuable public knowledge to share with the next generation and help us better understand present circumstances."**

**"...community media practitioners have a tremendous potential..."**

around in our heads. The extent to which we can suspend our assumptions and consider other points of view is the extent to which we are open to learning. Because the

dominant consumer culture and its corporate media boosters are omnipresent, community media practitioners will never lack a steady stream of messages worthy of examination. "Winning is the goal." But what happens if we cooperate instead of

compete? "Most great accom-

plishments have been the work of individual heroic figures." But weren't there a bunch of

people involved who didn't make it into the history books? Learners have the ability to continually question reality.

*Skill in Dialogue.* At the core of learning is dialogue, from the Greek word *dialogos*. *Dia* means through; *logos* means the word, or meaning. **David Bohm**, a quantum physicist, has suggested that the original meaning of dialogue was "a free flow of meaning between people, in the sense of a stream that flows between two

banks." According to Bohm, true dialogue allows a group to access a larger "pool of common meaning" that cannot be accessed individually. If we can get out of the TV-show box, community media practitioners have a tremendous

potential to bring people together for meaningful community conversations and problem solving. In doing so we increase our community's self-knowledge and

See *Nurturing*, next page...





## Fogo Island

Continued from page 6

members, meetings were set up with the key officials, leading to the plant's establishment. Other community development projects followed, including a boat-building collective and a consolidated high school.

Although Challenge for Change cannot be credited for the totality of these accomplishments, the project can be credited with stimulating collective confidence and action. According to Hénaut, "I think we can say that film broke through the bad habits of non-communication and misunderstanding and liberated the people from apathy. With the fresh film view of themselves, they



Photo courtesy National Film Board of Canada

**"...they evaluated their own capacities and energies and put them to work."**

evaluated their own capacities and energies and put them to work."

Source: Ralph Engelman (*Public Radio and Television in America*; 1996), Dorothy Henaut (*Challenge for Change Newsletter*, No. 7, Wtr. 1971-72)

## Nurturing Learning Communities

Continued from previous page

collective confidence. Through the practice of dialogue, learners come to a shared understanding.

*Inquiry and Advocacy Skills.* Inquiring into the views of others and advocating for our own positions are part of the give and take of learning. Management guru **Peter Senge** outlines the process this way: make your own reasoning explicit (say how you arrived at your view); encourage others to explore your view ("Do you see any gaps in my reasoning?"); encourage different views ("Do you have different data or different conclusions?"); and actively inquire into others' views that differ from your own ("What are your views? How did you arrive at your view?"). Learners are able to balance inquiry about others' ideas with advocacy for their own positions because they know learning is more important than winning.

*An Increased Understanding of our History.* Understanding our history makes us stronger. As community media advocates, we are empowered by the knowledge that our current efforts are part of a continuum of social justice work that reaches around the globe and permeates

human history. Unfortunately, the tenuous "public spaces" we have nurtured within an increasingly commercialized telecommunications landscape are often taken for granted. As community access practitioners and lifelong learners, part of our work is to share the history of community access and our hopes for

its future. Only then will we be able to raise the collective voices necessary to carry it into the next millennium. Learners are fortified through understanding their own history.

*Paula Manley is a community media educator and activist. She is the Executive Director of Tualatin Valley Community Access, a nonprofit community access center serving 16 rural and suburban communities in Oregon. She can be reached at (503) 629-8534 ext. 105 or pmanley@teleport.com*

**"...learning is more important than winning."**

## From the Editors

Continued from page 5  
empowerment.

As editors, we tried to develop a cohesive issue that speaks to the theory and practice of community access media training. We also tried to represent the wide variety of centers, training programs, technologies, and voices of Access staff. Putting together this edition has been much like the experiential learning process pictured on page six (and frequently used to guide training activities): we moved from experience to reflection to a clear vision of how we would apply our new knowledge in the future.

We wish to thank all those who contributed their time and support to realize this edition of *CMR*. We hope you enjoy it and learn as much from it as we have.

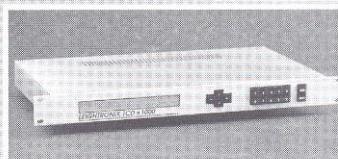
*jesikah maria ross and Kelly L. Aiken are co-editors of this issue of CMR.*

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# Using Technology for Democracy & Empowerment

Continued from page 9

more and more in common. Sarah Smiley, former Technology Coordinator for Malden Access Television (MATV) in

Massachusetts, recently wrote about the creation of their **Computer Resource Center**: "MATV, a non-profit community media access center whose mission is to provide

public access to communications technologies, began with a cable franchise agreement between **Time-Warner** and the **City of Malden**. Originally focused on the use of video as a communication tool through three public access cable channels, with the advent of new technologies, MATV's mission has expanded to include the Internet, computers, and digital media. Its root purpose is the same: to give people

who don't normally have access to communications technologies the ways and means to express their ideas."

(CTCNet Review, Spring 1996, p. 27.)



Photo courtesy CTCNet

*"CTCNet brings together agencies and programs that provide opportunities..."*

to be accessible to everyone, CTCNet is founded upon the belief that technology is a tool to help participants achieve their own goals: students work collaboratively as much as individually and learn as much from play as from work; teachers are facilitators, resources and participants in the learning process; curriculum is project-based. **John Dewey, Paolo Friere, and Ivan Illich** are informing philosophers.

**CTCNet's Approach to Media Training.** CTCNet has its roots in **Playing To Win (PTW)**, an organization established in 1980 to counter inequities in computer access. Guided by the radical democratic egalitarian principle that basic tools of daily life need

encourages exploration and discovery and, through this experience, develop personal skills and self-confidence. We have in the neighborhood of 200 affiliates and are swamped by requests for assistance. It's an exciting challenge.

John Dewey, Paolo Friere, and Ivan Illich were educators who advocated adult education as a means of fostering social change and achieving equitable community development. CTCNet promotes media training that integrates non-formal and adult education techniques to maximize the participant's learning experience and life skills. See the article by Jules N. Pretty et. al. on page 10 for more on non-formal/adult education.

Antonia Stone (tonistone@ctcnet.org)

is the founder of *Playing to Win*, the *Playing to Win Network*, and *CTCNet*; *Peter Miller* (peterm@ctcnet.org) is *CTCNet Director*. They can be reached at 617/969-7100 x2736.

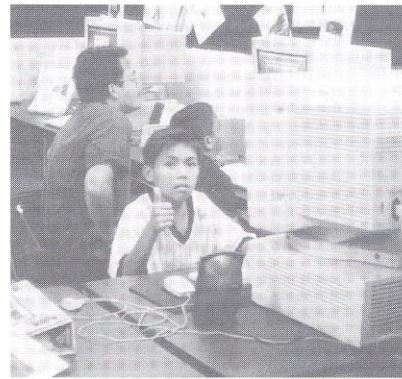


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*MATV's mission has expanded to include the Internet, computers, and digital media.*

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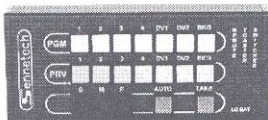
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**The Community Technology Center Review** is published biannually and is packed with public policy reports, training information, organizational strategies, software information, and more

CTCNet web site:  
<http://www.ctcnet.org>.

For information on CTCNet membership, resources, or electronic discussion lists, contact CTCNet at: Education Development Center, 55 Chapel St. Newton, MA 02158-1060 (617) 969-7100 ext. 2727 or [ctcnet@edc.org](mailto:ctcnet@edc.org)



# Evaluating Programs

Continued from page 11

to begin the analysis. Analysis is something we do every day; the important thing is to examine the information in a way that yields useful recommendations. Make sure everyone with a vested interest in your program—volunteers, board of directors, staff, participants, other organizations—has a chance to comment on your findings.

Questions to Ask About the Evaluation	Elements of the Evaluation Design
1. What is the general focus of the evaluation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are you trying to improve, discover?</li> <li>Who will the evaluation be for?</li> </ul>	Statement of evaluation objectives
2. What are the questions you are trying to answer? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the training program achieving its goals?</li> <li>Is it reaching its intended audience?</li> </ul>	List of evaluation questions
3. How will you collect the information needed to answer your questions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will you interview people?</li> <li>Administer a survey?</li> <li>Observe training activities?</li> <li>Will trainees collect information?</li> </ul>	Information collection plan (See <i>Information Collection Methods</i> , page 12)
4. How will you analyze and interpret the information? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What kind of criteria will you use to determine success?</li> <li>Will you compare to other media center training programs?</li> </ul>	Analysis and Interpretation plan
5. How will you communicate the evaluation findings? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will you communicate findings and recommendations throughout the evaluation process?</li> <li>Will you promote dialogue about the findings?</li> <li>Will you publish the results in a report?</li> <li>Will training participants have a chance to learn about the results and react?</li> </ul>	Reporting plan

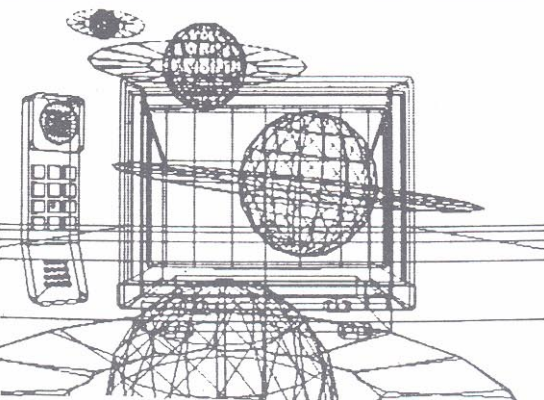
(Adapted from Brinkerhoff, R.O., Bethower, D.M., Nowakowski, J., and Hluchyj, T. *Program Evaluation: A Design Manual*. Boston, MA: Kluwer and Madaus, 1983)

**Evaluation=Action.** Evaluation is a dialogue process during which information is gathered, discussed, reflected upon, and then translated into action. All too often results never get translated into actions. One way to address this problem is to frame recommendations as an action plan with short- and long-term steps to achieve organizational and programmatic change. Link these steps to key decisions that must be made by your organization in order to implement major changes such as offering a new program or disbanding another. Also consider an evaluation of the evaluation. In six months to a year, plan to assess whether the evaluation was worthwhile, successful, and cost effective from the staff, trainer, and participant perspectives.

Evaluation in all its many forms will help you plan more effective programs which support the goals of community media: strengthening community, creating informed and critical users, and democratizing the media. Disseminate your evaluation results to policy makers to communicate the importance of community media and how it facilitates community development. Remember, evaluation equals action!

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# Training for Empowerment

Continued from page 8

Empowerment, therefore, consists of awareness, self-recognition, and action. This awareness includes a recognition of one's self, others, and society, and the power relationships involved within each as they intersect. Through self-reflection, a person sees how these relationships affect him or her. Recognition then leads to individual and/or group action to influence the personal and social realms.

## Ingredients of Empowerment Through Video.

That's the vision of empowerment that emerges from the public access, media education, and critical pedagogy literatures. Within a video production environment, the concept becomes more concrete. The definition suggests that a trainee or producer is aware of mainstream and alternative approaches to the following elements:

- the technical elements involved in program construction (e.g., audio, lighting, editing, etc.);
- the symbolic codes that are behind this program construction (e.g., close up conveys the idea of talking face-to-face with someone);
- the values and beliefs these codes represent (e.g., talking close enough to stare into someone's eyes is socially acceptable);
- media structure, including ownership, economics, program distribution, and the organization of the production team (e.g., using a traditional top-down organizational model for the production group);
- the influence of media on society, and society on media (e.g., the impact of advertising and capitalism).

The definition of empowerment also suggests that, in addition to these cognitive elements, a trainee or producer should be able to recognize that all of these elements are human constructions and can be changed. Here is where the question of self-reflectivity enters: the empowered producer is seen as someone who also is able to position himself or herself in relation to the above elements.

For example: does the producer

choose to reproduce the traditional means of video representation by consciously using established norms of video production? The rules sometimes reflect traditional values toward women, expressed symbolically. Where does she place herself with regard to these values? Does recognizing these rules and the values behind them, as well as her own relationship to the rules and values, lead her to

lobby to change them in her video program? In her daily life? In short, does the process and content learned from working with video equipment carry over into other aspects of the trainee's life?

This is the construction of empowerment that Higgins worked with in his doctoral study, **Tracing The Vision: A Study of Community Volunteer Producers, Public Access Cable Television, and Empowerment** (1994). It is worth noting that empowerment is not something that can be given to another person; empowerment is a condition that originates from within the self. In other words, no one gives you a voice; instead, you find your own voice.

## Training Methods for Empowerment.

How can we advance this concept of empowerment within our training programs? One way is by using teaching techniques and training strategies that encourage what Higgins calls "empowering moments": a time when the participant becomes fully aware of a new process, new skills, or a new way of perceiving the world. Empowering moments engage people in their own dynamic learning process, motivating them to continue to learn and apply their learning outside the Access center. What are some training methods that facilitate empowering moments? Here are a few suggestions:

*Create opportunities for sharing.* Sharing information, stories, viewpoints,

and experiences with others who are different from you is a powerful way to gain new perspectives. Set aside time in your training for people to talk about themselves, what is important to them, what issues they are passionate about, or why they came to learn how to make TV. Hold debriefing sessions after different segments of your training for people to reflect on what they are learning and how they feel about it.

*Encourage group work.* Collective learning and decision making is important. It brings diverse individuals together to negotiate common understandings, forge common goals, and figure out how best to work as a team. These skills can carry over into other aspects of a participant's life. Group work provides trainees with the opportunity to meet and get to know others, feel part of a team, do something fun and different, and contribute to a project they think is important—all of which can be eye-opening experiences. Consider incorporating small group exercises or team projects throughout your workshops.

*Use an integrated approach.* Diverse training components accommodate different learning styles and engage participants on different levels. Combine equipment practice, critical viewing exercises, Access history lecturettes, and group work in your training. Get people's hands on equipment first. Give them theory and Access philosophy later when their heads are overflowing with technical information and they are ready to learn about something other than equipment.

*Show examples of nontraditional television programs.* Show as much alternative media as you can to give people a sense of the possibilities outside of mainstream TV. Use examples that reflect an Access perspective. Showing and discussing video clips is a great way to break up a workshop and lets people see and feel the difference between community media and mass media.

**See Training, next page...**





# Training for Empowerment

Continued from previous page

*Facilitate one-on-one learning.*

People learn primarily in one-on-one situations. To build skills, self-confidence, and interest, create ways for participants to learn from one another. In workshop settings, divide the group into pairs and have each team do an activity where individuals complete a technical exercise and then show their teammate how they did it. Outside of workshops, designate a staff person to help trainees plug into existing crews or match them up to work on other producers' shows or with "mentor producers." The opportunity to share ideas and techniques with more experienced individuals promotes empowering

**"...empowerment is not something that can be given to another person..."**

moments.

**Living Our Mission.** Higgins' study reminds us that the transformation of the world was the vision behind the emergence of public access television and that

this vision was to be implemented, in part, by empowering people through our video training programs. For community

media to survive and flourish in today's changing telecommunications landscape, it is vital to demonstrate to policy makers how public access television actually facilitates empowerment and, consequently, contributes to community development. To do this, we need to articulate what we think empowerment is so that we can effectively design and deliver training programs that yield empowerment as a documented outcome. Higgins' work is especially useful here since it provides a definition of empowerment and gives us ideas on how to turn that definition into action. Reassessing our training programs and integrating methods that intentionally promote empowering moments will help ensure an effective and long-lasting approach to the social change envisioned by Access pioneers.

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*John W. Higgins is assistant professor of communication in the Department of Communication at the University of San Francisco. He can be reached at (415) 422-2772 or [higginsj@usfca.edu](mailto:higginsj@usfca.edu).*

## Texts

Critical pedagogy is concerned with the content and process of teaching and learning. Its advocates are concerned with the connection between education and social change. Some books of interest to community access workers include: **Life In Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education** by Peter McLaren (New York, Longman, 1989).

**Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change** by Ira Shor (Chicago, University of Chicago Press; 1992).

**We Make The Road By Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change** by Myles Horton and Paulo Freire (Philadelphia, Temple University Press; 1990).

## Resources

"The Origins of Public Access Cable Television: 1966-1972" by Ralph Engleman (Journalism Monographs 123, October: 1990).

**Public Radio and Television in America: A Political History** by Ralph Engleman (Thousand Oaks, Sage; 1996).

**Public Access Cable Television in the United States and Canada** by Gilbert Gillespie (New York, Praeger; 1975).

## Voices

Continued from page 14

progress. These evaluations yield both qualitative and quantitative information. Evaluation results are compiled and discussed by CTVN staff. If feasible, suggestions are incorporated into upcoming classes.

**Hard Cover** is an excellent opportunity for youth to work in all facets of video production. The show provides participants with production skills and community service experience. It contributes to fostering community development by encouraging disadvantaged urban youth to use the medium of television to voice their issues, find creative solutions to local problems, educate the audience, and create a better future for themselves and their neighborhoods.

*Denise Zaccardi is the Executive Director of the Community TV Network. She has worked as a media arts education activist for 23 years. She can be reached at (773) 278-8500 or [TVNET1@aol.com](mailto:TVNET1@aol.com)*

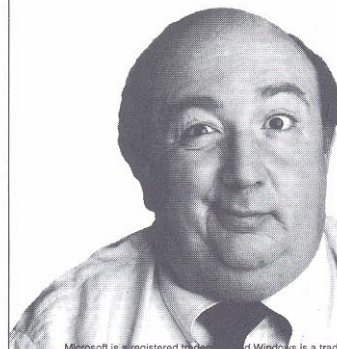
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# A Trainer's Guide to Participatory Learning

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learning is best done through active involvement. This implies that the process of learning (or training) matters more than the actual subject. Adults have a particular problem with learning. As we grow older, our short-term memory faculty becomes less efficient and more easily disturbed. We find it harder to translate what we see or hear to long-term memory. Methods such as lectures and demonstrations on equipment use often fail because the learner is viewed as a passive recipient of

information and the process relies too much on short-term memory. For learning to stick, it has to be internalized. Trainees must make it their own. Learning occurs when the learners are wholly and actively involved in their learning all the time, and when they are allowed to work at their own pace. All of this requires continued and regular practice. A well-designed course obliges participants to continue building on skills and knowledge learned earlier. Without reinforcement, the skills will fade.

**Establishing Rapport With Learners.** Another key element in creating effective learning environments is to encourage trainees to feel at ease in the training setting you are providing. To do this, consider the following points (see *Building Trust*, this page):

- Ensure that they feel necessary, involved, or important. This gives them the motivation which is necessary for learning to take place.
- Communicate clearly what the training program will entail. They must be convinced that content will be relevant and that specific skills learned will fulfill needs.
- Ensure that there are plenty of practical exercises. As they are 'doing', self-confidence increases and they are able to adapt what they are learning to their own circumstances.
- Respect and encourage individuality since people learn at different rates and have different styles.
- Continue to relate new material to information and skills which they already know.

**Anticipated Results.** Incorporating the tenets of participatory learning and action into your training program will ultimately increase your organization's accomplishments. Understanding how adults learn best will help you design a training program that serves their needs and recognizes their intrinsic values. Providing a safe environment where participants can gain experience, reflect on it, integrate new ideas, and experiment will lead to a more successful learning experience. By doing these things you can increase the sustainability of participant efforts within your program and out in the community. What more could you ask for

when training for community development.

For information on the Handbook contact the Institute at 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD England or 44-171-388-2117. Special thanks to Dr. Laurie Lippen, Adult Education Specialist, Department of Human & Community Development, University of California Davis for editorial assistance and sidebar information. The editors wish to thank the authors, the illustrator, and the International Institute for Environment and Development for giving permission to reprint their work.

## Building Trust

**B**uilding trust and rapport serves to facilitate adult learning.

When participants feel sufficient trust they are able to participate more fully, share doubts and questions, contribute their ideas. When working with a group, attend to basic safety and trust needs initially by allowing time for participants to become acquainted with each other and with you. This is not just a nicety; this is a way to personalize and make comfortable the learning environment for all present.

### *Climate setting hints:*

1. Start with a welcome and a quick ice-breaker. What's the best public access TV show you've ever seen? What's the worst? What's your greatest fantasy of the impact of public access T.V.? What's the fantasy program you want to produce?
2. Allow ample time for introductions, sharing of strengths and weaknesses, backgrounds relevant to their interest in community media. Share about yourself and how you got started, how you learned, what helped or hindered you. Introductions help participants find a place to belong in the group.
3. Elicit expectations, fears and concerns. Allow for a sharing of strengths and skills that trainees are bringing to you.
4. State clearly the objectives of your training session and an agenda for your time together and always honor your time contracts.

Source: Dr. Laurie Lippen

## Resources

**T**raining Trainers for Development. This manual prepares trainers to use interactive, learner-centered methods that are most effective for adult learners, to conduct a needs assessment, and to design, implement, and evaluate participatory training (The Centre for Development & Population Activities, 1995). Available through WOMEN, INK. (212) 687-8633 or wink@igc.apc.org.

**The Winning Trainer**, by Julius E. Eittington. A one-stop sourcebook with more than 100 handouts on participatory training techniques and activities. It describes each technique and its effective usage, presents examples of using participatory training methods, and explains how to design various training activities (Gulf Publishing, 3rd ed., 1996) Available through WOMEN, INK. (212) 687-8633 or wink@igc.apc.org.

**Active Training, Or 101 Ways To Make Training Active**, by Mel Silberman. **Active Training** shows you how to teach adults the way they learn best: by doing. This handbook is packed with information to help you create new training programs, modify existing courses, and combine a variety of facilitation techniques to conduct your training more successfully. **101 Ways...** is a field guide with "proven generic activities" that will enliven your sessions and deepen learning and retention. (publisher..) Available through Pfeiffer, (800)-274-4434 or <http://www.pfeiffer.com>.



# Mission Meets Method in New York City

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produced.

Organizational reports are supplemented by information gathered by an MNN liaison.

Liaisons observe workshops, hold discussions with video instructors, and interview program participants. These discussions and interviews cover various aspects of the workshop and possible follow-up

activities. For instance, there are always key questions liaisons ask: Did the workshop reach its goals? Have the participants taken steps to continue video production? What did participants learn in addition to video production? What are their needs for continuing support at the completion of the workshop? Would they like to utilize the main MNN center, or would they rather continue to work through their community organization?

The Revolving Grant Fund training programs are also evaluated with regard to how organizations use the video program to develop and expand people's roles as active members of their

community. To measure possible change as a result of the community trainings, we ask questions like: Do the organizations hold community screenings, allowing the participants to discuss the work with an audience? How well is the video program integrated into the organization's overall mission and other community services. Does the video program challenge the participants to evaluate their political and social position in their community? Do the participants learn to question the power of media, both their own and that created by the major media?

Based on a variety of evaluation methods, one Revolving Fund project—the **Women's Prison Association (WPA)**—has had some striking results. As

an agency that provides social services, creative outlets, and practical skills to incarcerated women, the WPA participated in a community training program that resulted in four completed TV programs. Participants were interviewed about how this video training and production endeavor fit into their overall recovery. For these women, being

trusted with valuable equipment and participating in this program was challenging and empowering. As WPA workshop participant **Sandra Walker** put it: "We robbed, we stole and we lied and all that stuff. Now we had a chance to get involved with this project and be trusted."

These diverse evaluation methods help MNN to better facilitate current programs and to design and oversee successful future projects.

**Building Community Capacity.** The MNN Revolving Grant Fund program helps organizations build the capacity to achieve their community development or social

change mission through providing access to video equipment and training in its use. The program is rooted in the notion of serving the community by listening and attending to the diverse needs of different constituencies. Those of us involved in training program design and delivery must continually be open to adapting new education and outreach methods. We must merge the needs of the public access center with the needs of the community, with trainers acting as facilitators in this social action collaboration.

*Linda Iannacone works in Education*

and Outreach at Manhattan Neighborhood Network. For more information on MNN's Revolving Grant Fund contact Victor Sanchez, MNN Director of Education & Outreach at (212) 757-2670 or [Sanchez@mn.org](mailto:Sanchez@mn.org)

## Training Components

**M**ost of the training should take place in a community setting and should be based on local problems. Local institutions can be encouraged to use the training program as an opportunity for their own program development.

The training should place a strong emphasis on problem solving and decision making. Problems are discussed and alternative solutions appraised. For example, the problem of illiteracy in low-income areas can be discussed by participants, who then analyze the reasons for low literacy rates in certain populations.

Training should be iterative, so that participants can analyze issues in detail and report findings back to each other.

Significant time should be devoted to sharing of experiences within the group. This helps community members develop confidence in analyzing and finding solutions to local problems, by giving a broad base to their expertise.

The skills of analysis, planning, and community impact should be further consolidated through exercises (for example, public screenings and discussions) in the community facilitated by the participants. Participants should be encouraged to make presentations to groups as well as each other. This ensures wide consultation and feedback on the issues, builds confidence and skills, and gets the trainees' message out to the larger community.

*Adapted from Jules N. Pretty, Irene Gujit, Ian Scoones, and John Thompson, **Participatory Learning & Action: A Trainers Guide**. International Institute for Environment and Development, 1995.*



*Photo courtesy MNN*

**The WPA participated in a community training program that resulted in four completed TV programs.**

**"We robbed, we stole and we lied and all that stuff. Now we had a chance to get involved with this project and be trusted."**



# CyberSkills and Community Regeneration

## ONE C/TC Achievements

- ✓ Conducted comprehensive audit of neighborhood and business needs with regard to information technology training and access.
- ✓ Entered into formal partnership for an international development initiative, **CyberSkills**, with ICL and the **South Bristol Learning Network**.
- ✓ Sited, renovated and opened a community-based facility for technology access and training.
- ✓ Developed a community-based basic and professional computer curriculum for 20 soon-to-be-accredited courses
- ✓ Delivered basic computer training to 1600 job seekers. The majority of our trainees are unemployed, female, and live within the poverty level. Thirty percent have moved on to professional level skills. Fifteen percent have moved on to jobs following additional training.
- ✓ Provided affordable training and technical services to over 50 neighborhood organizations and state agencies.
- ✓ Employed 12 staff members, 10 of whom are neighborhood residents.
- ✓ Cultivated a volunteer base of 100 volunteer "faculty," 25 of whom are active; half of these have moved on as paid instructors with the center.
- ✓ Leveraged 4500 hours of volunteer training labor in core team delivery of basic training and access site staffing.
- ✓ Cultivated major partnerships with work force and community development organizations, including the **Vermont Department of Employment and Training, Department of Social Welfare, Social and Rehabilitative Services, Community Action** and **United Way** agencies, private employment agencies and municipal government.
- ✓ Completed a business plan and launched a path to self-sufficiency through the delivery of CyberSkills workshops and contracts, technical services, local and national philanthropy, licensing fees, and skills transfers for **CyberSkills Development Agencies**.

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session that includes literacy and stresses easy-to-accomplish production, the CyberSkills Awareness Raising Workshops focus on the individual's role in the information society and the connections between them and their organizations, sector, and community. The emphasis is on human networks and skills building (not technology). Workshops combine strategic planning and hands-on experience with the World Wide Web, managed services, networked CD-ROMs and video and data conferencing. These user-friendly workshops are ideal for individuals, businesses, and organizations who want to gain a clearer understanding of the applications of new information technologies.

Half- and full-day workshops are offered for general or sector-specific participants. All participants are asked to complete an action plan which will lead them and their organizations to the next step in the CyberSkills process—skills development—which includes taking advantage of training opportunities offered by ONE C/TC and other organizations. Our trainers follow up on the action plans and work with individuals as they move through training to becoming content producers.

Action plans can be modest ("I want to learn more about the Internet and how to make a web site for my maple sugar business"), or ambitious ("I want my board of directors to participate in a customized awareness-raising workshop to support our strategic planning work"). Action Plans may result in scholarships (40 workshop seats for adult job seekers funded by NYNEX), or lead to the collaboration of organizations within a sector or individuals within a group. Action plans link sectors (Chamber of Commerce initiatives that serve high-school drop-outs at the local technical sector with ONE C/TC partnership), and they link communities.

3. *Provide Appropriate Training for Skills Development.* ONE C/TC's strength is the range of skills we offer to job seekers, employed workers and small business operators, and non-profit organi-

zations. We focus on awareness raising and confidence building and provide basic and professional level skills in the form of courses and customized training. Over the past 20 months we have trained 1600 individuals in basic and professional level skills. We also provide computer repair training, in-home training, and technical

services for house-bound clients, and skills transfer for those interested in starting new CyberSkills Development Agencies.

All of our trainers work in core teams, which enable those with more skills to support those who want to learn skills and how to be trainers. Volunteer trainers who contribute their skills to the Basic Training Workshops move into lead training positions in the Professional

Series. All of the trainers participate in monthly professional development sessions led by CTC staff members. During these sessions we discuss training strategies, review our basic curriculum, and focus on improving our delivery. Many of our trainers move on to paid positions in related fields.

4. *Promote Content Production and Economic Activity.* Content is the currency of the knowledge-based economy. With the necessary awareness and skills, job seekers, business owners, and community leaders are prepared to turn their knowledge into economic activity. Content is a broad term that ranges from resumes to spreadsheets, Internet research and web site design. The ability to use information technology to make information decisions, market products, and turn knowledge into value is the key to our prosperity in the global digital economy.

At the Old North End Community/Technology Center we turn our knowledge into training programs, curriculum, technical services, and web site production. Under the supervision of our technical director, we provide computer repair, network installation and technical support to small businesses and non-profit organizations for hourly and contract rates.

**Sustainable Development.** Our communities' ability to succeed in the global market depends on individual

**See CyberSkills, next page...**



# TVCA's '3 Valleys Project' Flourishes in Oregon

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asked, "What do you like about your community?" and "What do you dislike?" and "What would you like to change?"

A strong commitment and concern for

## Cyberskills

Continued from previous page

awareness of new information technologies, our access to requisite skills and appropriate tools, strong local partnerships and a community's commitment to a sustainable local economy. Whether we are in Vermont, Newark, or Nebraska, the digital era requires us to use technology to support development in all sectors of our communities and, in the process, build the knowledge base for continuous learning and regeneration. The community television movement provides a firm basis upon which to build community regeneration and business enterprises that will support our neighbors.

*Lauren-Glenn Davitian is the Executive Director of Chittenden Community Television. She can be reached at (802) 862-1645 ext. 12, or [davitian@cctv.org](mailto:davitian@cctv.org)*

the towns' young people emerged as the dominant theme in the group meetings. School drop-out rates were alarmingly high, particularly among Latino youth. Drug and alcohol use was rampant, the influence of gangs was a concern, and many young people themselves expressed an attitude that could be summed up as, "What's the point?"

In a series of large, bilingual *Valley Conversations*, which were televised with the participants' permission, people of many ages came together for a dialogue about the needs of youth in Cornelius and Forest Grove. By the third *Conversation*, the group was ready to focus on ideas for community action. Strong support was expressed for a project that would 1) bring youth and adults together, 2) be multicultural and 3) build on existing community programs. With \$20,000 in seed money from the Rockefeller Foundation, the steering committee is now working with existing community organizations to incubate a

specific project.

Although it is too soon to know what lasting impact the 3 Valleys Project will have in the Tualatin Valley, some changes are already being felt. The translation system purchased for the project, which allows people with language differences to speak together in near real time, has

been used on a continuing basis by local governments and community organizations with powerful results. For

the first time, the area's monolingual Spanish speakers and English speakers are communicating eye to eye without an interpreter between them.

It appears that the 3 Valleys Project has also succeeded in sparking the habit of public dialogue in Cornelius, a town whose physical layout lacks a town center or gathering place. Last week 250 people showed up for the first in a series of town meetings designed to "engage people in the future of their city."

**"...people of many ages came together for a dialogue about the needs of youth..."**

## An Invitation to Join the

# Alliance for Communications Democracy

6...increasing awareness of Community Television through educational programs and participation in court cases involving franchise enforcement and constitutional questions about access television.

**Become an Alliance Subscriber for \$350/year** and receive detailed reports on current court cases threatening access, pertinent historical case citations, and other Alliance activities.

- Voting membership open to non-profit access operations for an annual contribution of \$3,000.
- Non-voting memberships available to organizations and individuals at the following levels:
  - Alliance Associate, \$2500 - copies of all briefs and reports.
  - Alliance Supporter, \$500 - copies of all reports and enclosures.
  - Alliance Subscriber, \$350 - copies of all reports.

Direct membership inquiries to Rob Brading, Multnomah Community Television, 26000 SE Stark St., Gresham, OR 97038, or phone 503/667-7636.

**Voting Members:** Chicago Access Corporation, Illinois • Montgomery Community Television, Inc., Maryland • Staten Island Television, New York • Boston Community Access & Programming Foundation, Inc., Massachusetts • GRTV, Grand Rapids, Michigan • Tuscon Community Cable Corporation, Arizona • Ōlelo: The Corporation for Community TV, Hawaii • Multnomah Community TV, Oregon • Manhattan Neighborhood Network, New York • Cable Access St. Paul, Minnesota.

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# The Fight for Community Media Has Moved Closer to Home...

Thanks to the financial support of your colleagues last year, the Alliance protected PEG access by ensuring public rights-of-way payments to local communities by "open video services" providers -- through the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and subsequent FCC rulemakings. But the fight's not over yet -- it's just moved a little closer to home... Since the Regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCs) could not get everything they wanted from Congress or the FCC, they are now pressuring state houses to eliminate local franchise payments. At the same time, cable operators are trying to expand their national programming offerings in order to compete with Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) providers, rather than supporting more local PEG access programming. The

Alliance anticipated these fights and geared up for them over a year ago: hiring a full-time government relations specialist, developing new advocacy and franchise renewal booklets, recruiting state public policy coordinators, and is offering technical assistance in franchise renewals. The fight may be over for the Alliance without your financial support. Become a member of the Public Policy Council or Network-- and make sure the Alliance continues to fight on your behalf!

## Public Policy Council (\$2,500 or more\*)

Brooklyn Community Access TV, Brooklyn NY  
Capital Community Television, Salem OR  
Chicago Access Corporation, Chicago IL  
Cincinnati Community Video, Cincinnati OH  
Manhattan Neighborhood Network, NY  
N. Suburban Access Corp, Roseville MN  
'Olelo: The Corporation for Community TV,  
Honolulu, HI

*\* Based on contributions received between  
June 1996 and April 1997.*

## Public Policy Network (\$500 And \$1,000\*)

Access Sacramento, CA  
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Cape Cod Comm. TV, S. Yarmouth MA  
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Donors of \$100 or more receive an Alliance lapel pin. Public Policy Network and Council Members receive regular news updates. Council members receive more detailed information and direct consultation with the Government Relations Director. Send your check to the Alliance for Community Media, 666 11th St., NW, Suite 806, Washington DC 20001. **Thank you!**



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